UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly
Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/50/95
E/1995/17
13 March 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fiftieth session
Item 110 of the preliminary list*
INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
Substantive session of 1995
SOCIAL, HUMANITARIAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: NARCOTIC DRUGS

Letter dated 13 March 1995 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of an aide-mémoire by the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on the suppression of illicit traffic in narcotic drugs in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 110 of the preliminary list, and of the Economic and Social Council, under the item entitled "Social, humanitarian and human rights questions: narcotic drugs".

(Signed) Dragomir DJOKIC
Ambassador
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ANNEX

Aide-mémoire

I

A short account of the situation in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the related field is necessary to understand the problem of illicit traffic in narcotic drugs in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Illicit traffic in narcotic drugs was first documented as a serious problem in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the late 1960s. Owing to its location, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was primarily a transit country traversed by narcotics routes, leading from producers in the Middle East and Central Asia to consumers in Western Europe by land, sea and air.

There were two important land routes, one from Istanbul, via Sofia, Belgrade and Zagreb to Austria, the Federal Republic of Germany and Northern Europe or Italy and France, and, the other, from Istanbul via Greece, entering Yugoslavia at the Bogorodica border crossing and continuing via Skopje and Belgrade to Western Europe.

Narcotic drugs were most often smuggled in passenger cars, lorries, personal luggage and clothes of passengers travelling by bus or train. Automobile bodies and specially built bunkers were used as hiding places.

The authorities of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia also discovered many sea and air routes leading to Western Europe and the United States, and, in cooperation with the customs authorities, took vigorous measures to intercept the illicit traffic, in which they had considerable success. The table below illustrates the results achieved:

Year	Weight (kilograms)	Number of seizures
1974	6 385	102
1975	5 155	98
1976	4 105	148
1977	3 640	176
1978	2 537	156
1979	2 181	140
1980	1 183	247
1981	526	223
1982	227	207
1983	4 327	371
1984	66	362
1985	51	440
1986	143	560

Year	Weight (kilograms)	Number of seizures
1987	231	566
1988	500	616
1989	353	483
1990	480	1 013
1991	292	85

Prior to 1977, hashish seizures were most frequent. From 1977 on, hashish seizures began to decrease gradually and heroin was seized for the first time. In 1977, 269 grams of heroin were seized; in 1978 31 kilograms; in 1979 72 kilograms; in 1980 301; in 1981 157; in 1982 78; in 1983 57; in 1984 13; in 1985 2; in 1986 28; in 1987 110; in 1988 152; in 1989 54; in 1990 231; and in 1991 180.

The success of the Yugoslav police and customs authorities was attributable also to their very diversified cooperation with counterparts abroad. It included, among others, an effective exchange of operative data and information, joint actions in intercepting the organized international traffic routes and many seminars abroad, which Yugoslav experts used to brush up their knowledge in the field of the suppression of illicit traffic in narcotic drugs.

II

The forcible secession of some of the republics of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the outbreak of war in the territory of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia accounted for the re-routing of the traditional traffic routes exemplified by the so-called "Balkan route". The sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the cargo transit ban reduced passenger and cargo transport through the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and, by extension, brought about a redirection of the narcotics routes towards Western Europe. Accordingly, illicit traffic in narcotic drugs via the most important land routes (Turkey-Bulgaria-Yugoslavia and Turkey-Greece-the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia-Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) has been considerably reduced. This traffic now makes a detour of Yugoslavia and going from Turkey via Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and the Czech Republic ends in the Federal Republic of Germany and Western Europe.

The table below illustrates the resultant reduction in narcotic drug seizures:

Year	Weight (kilograms)	Number of seizures
1992	130	280
1993	272	465
1994	10	6 a/

a/ Data available only for the first quarter of 1994.

There were also fewer heroin seizures in the last three years:

1992	86 kg
1993	89 kg
1994	9 kg

The reduction in the number of seizures is also attributable in large measure to the action of the international community, which discontinued its cooperation and suspended the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from the United Nations and its bodies dealing with the problems of the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and crime in general.

The United Nations sanctions accounted for the suspension of the United Nations Drug Control Programme project of equipping mobile customs teams to combat illicit traffic in narcotic drugs.

Important information relevant to illicit traffic in narcotic drugs is withheld from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and when such information is not withheld, it is made available with considerable delay. Yugoslav police and customs representatives are prevented from participating in international meetings in and outside the United Nations on the suppression of illicit traffic in narcotic drugs and from making their contribution to the creation of an international strategy in this field. They are also debarred from acquainting themselves with the latest international experience and from acquiring professional knowledge, while foreign professional magazines are no longer received.

At the sixty-second session of the General Assembly of INTERPOL, held at Aruba in October 1993, a resolution was passed that refused to recognize the continuity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in INTERPOL. Following this resolution, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was excluded from the INTERPOL telecommunications network. For two years now, the official authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have received no information from the General Secretariat of INTERPOL and their cooperation with counterparts abroad takes place exclusively on a bilateral basis.

In addition, the customs authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia have had no contacts with the European Customs Cooperation Council over the last three years.

It is estimated, however, that the sanctions have reduced the transit of narcotic drugs through the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia only temporarily and that alternative routes are of equally transient nature. Once they are lifted and cargo and passenger transport is re-established, the "Balkan route" will re-surface again. It is, therefore, important that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia keep abreast of the developments in this field and preserve an effective service, which will be able to come to grips with the problems that the country will, no doubt, be faced with upon the resurgence of organized illicit traffic in narcotic drugs through its territory.

III

Ethnic Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija, Bujanovac and Presevo have taken over international illicit traffic in narcotic drugs in the last 10 years. Much of the proceeds from the illicit traffic is put towards purchasing arms and smuggling them into the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, that is, Kosovo and Metohija, for the purpose of seceding forcibly from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The data given below are very illustrative:

- In 1992, 304 kilograms of narcotic drugs were seized from Yugoslav citizens and 227 persons were arrested, 127 of them ethnic Albanians;

- In 1993, 78 kilograms of narcotic drugs were seized and 120 Yugoslav citizens were arrested, 67 of them ethnic Albanians;

- In 1994, 132 kilograms of narcotic drugs were seized and 53 Yugoslav citizens were arrested, 24 of them ethnic Albanians.

Given below are data on narcotic drug seizures in Yugoslavia and abroad in which ethnic Albanians were involved:

- In the first half of 1988, 55 persons, mainly ethnic Albanians, were arrested in Prishtina. The group had smuggled between 150 and 200 kilograms of heroin from Turkey to Western Europe through Yugoslavia for over three years;

- In 1988, about of 40 Yugoslav citizens, mainly ethnic Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija, Bujanovac and Presevo, were arrested in Vienna. The group had smuggled, via an organized network, about 100 kilograms of heroin from Turkey to Western Europe through Yugoslavia;

- Between 1991 and 1993, over 300 Albanians from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia were arrested in 16 Swiss cantons. The group had sold about 200 kilograms of heroin in Switzerland. The proceeds from the sale had been used for the purchase of arms in Switzerland for their re-sale in Yugoslavia. The Swiss authorities interrogated 145

suspects and found out that at least 227 automatic rifles had been smuggled into Germany and Austria and 105 automatic rifles into Italy. Only 23 automatic rifles were seized. The Swiss authorities believe that much larger quantities of arms were smuggled into Yugoslavia;

- On 24 March 1992, 60 kilograms of heroin were seized in Italy and five persons were arrested;

- On 13 August 1992, 10 kilograms of heroin were seized in Italy and five persons were arrested;

- On 16 September 1992, 13 kilograms of heroin were seized in Italy and two persons were arrested;

- On 17 January 1994, 20 kilograms of heroin were seized in Italy and two persons were arrested;

- On 21 July 1994, 25 kilograms of heroin were seized in Austria and one person was arrested;

- On 25 October 1994, 35 kilograms of heroin were seized in Switzerland and two persons were arrested.

All the arrested persons were ethnic Albanians from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Yugoslav police and customs authorities possess reliable data on the mass participation of ethnic Albanians in the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs, the destination of which is Western Europe and the United States. The connection runs to Albania itself and the western parts of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia where ethnic Albanians also live. This fact and the continued isolation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and its responsible authorities will make it even more difficult for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to combat expansion of illicit traffic in narcotic drugs from its territory and to fulfil its obligations under international conventions relating to the suppression of the illicit traffic in narcotic drugs.